

**Minutes of the Seven Corners Transportation and Land Use Task Force
July 11, 2013 Meeting**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM
Mason District Government Center

Attendance:

Task Force: John Thillmann, Evelyn Haught, Paul Byrtus, Mark Silverwood, Jim Mcilvaine, Iqbal Khaiy, Karl Moritz, Martin Faga, and Pat Hoar.

Staff: Elizabeth Hagg (OCR), JoAnne Fiebe (OCR), Timothy Maher (OCR), Bernie Suchicital (DPZ), Michael Garcia (FCDOT), Kris Morley-Nikfar (FCDOT), Dan Rathbone (FCDOT) and Aaron Frank representing Supervisor Gross

Co-Chair John Thillmann reported on administrative items. The Minutes of the June 11, 2012 Task Force meeting were approved as amended to include Martin Faga on the list of attendees.

Mr. Thillmann introduced the first speaker, Brian Laverty with Parsons Brinckerhoff who presented the Transit Alternatives Analysis Study of the Route 7 Corridor. The study was commissioned by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC). Mr. Laverty explained that the portion of Route 7 being studied is from Tysons to the waterfront in the City of Alexandria and the task is to evaluate rapid transit service to improve mobility and reliability along its length. The northern terminus will be one of the new Metro stations in Tysons. The study also includes alternative routing options to address areas on Route 7 where there are right-of-way constraints to add the proposed service. Areas where service routing may be required include:

- Southern 2 miles in Alexandria
- Segment between Seven Corners and Falls Church (existing condition is four lanes with no median)

Brian defined rapid transit service to include fewer stops, dedicated right-of-way, off-board fare payment, improved stations/stops, rapid boarding, and frequent service. There are five different modes being considered.

The NVTC performed a series of surveys between March and May to understand where people traveled and for what purpose, and to gauge public interest in rapid transit service. They found that Seven Corners ranks near the top (40%) of non-work travel destinations for those who live along Route 7. Of those surveyed, 57% stated that they are interested in a hypothetical new rapid transit system. Brian also explained that most people will not be traveling the length of the study area and thus shorter, local trips will support ridership numbers. Most people need to get either to Tysons or to a Metrorail (to travel in to DC). The survey found that frequent service and higher travel speed would most increase transit ridership.

Two upcoming public meetings were announced:

1. 7/25 from 7:00-9:00pm at the Skyline 7 building in Baileys Crossroads
2. 9/18 from 7:00-9:00pm at the Skyline 7 building in Baileys Crossroads

Alternatives are expected to be presented at the September meeting. Mr. Thillmann asked the Task Force to take a position and requested that the consultant return to present the alternatives to the Task Force on September 10th.

Mr. Thillmann introduced Zachary Horowitz of Kittelson and Associates, Inc. for a presentation on the preliminary results of the existing traffic conditions study in Seven Corners. The traffic study was conducted using a variety of methods including tube counts, turning movement counts, and an innovative approach that involves helicopter-based time-lapse aerial photography. The study paid particular attention to vehicle origins and destinations within the survey area, tracking vehicle queuing locations and times, and Level of Service (LOS) grades at each intersection. Initial ground-based counts were taken on April 10th and 20th, 2013 to determine peak periods of traffic, discovered to fall within these times:

- Weekday mornings 7:45-8:45am
- Weekday evenings, 5:30-6:30pm
- Saturday afternoon, 12:00-1:00pm

Skycomp, Inc. time-lapse aerial photography counts were performed April 16, 2013 during the morning and evening peak times with over 3,600 photographs taken each hour.

Mr. Horowitz explained that traffic conditions are very similar during both morning and evening peaks with Route 50 being the most heavily travelled road in the area followed closely by Route 7. Together these roads account for 75% of the total travel patterns in the area. Traffic is split 60/40 eastbound on Rt. 50 and split 60/40 westbound on Rt. 7 in the mornings, with these patterns reversing for the evening peak hour. In addition, Roosevelt Blvd northbound experiences considerable volume in the mornings. He said it was unusual but that Seven Corners PM traffic and Saturday traffic are equally high. Over 80% of traffic entering the Seven Corners area is through-traffic in both morning and evening peak hours. Little to no pedestrian traffic and only some bicycle traffic were observed in the survey area.

LOS was measured for all intersections within the survey area, with many locations receiving an A (<10 seconds of delay), B (10-20 seconds), or C (20-35 seconds) grade. However, in both morning and evening peak periods, all of the intersections that make up the Seven Corners interchange received a LOS grade F (>80 seconds). In addition, queue times and lengths around the interchange were problematic, often involving vehicles queuing in the middle of intersections and blocking cross-traffic. Though considerable at both peak periods, wait times were longer within the interchange during the evening peak.

He stated that in Phase II of the transportation study, they will take the existing conditions and look for mitigation measures. They also will assess future land use scenarios and identify possible medium and long-term improvements. He noted that the origins and destination analysis from Phase I of the study will help them determine what improvements will be beneficial.

John Thillmann urged them not to only think in terms of existing roadways in developing potential solutions and to include alternative transit options presented in the Route 7 study. Mike Garcia explained that staff will take into account the NVTC and County-wide Transit Studies and feed them into their work. Karl Moritz asked if the survey could distinguish between local and commuter traffic and stated that if the pedestrian and bicycle network was made more robust, more local trips could happen without going through the interchange. Iqbal Khaiy expressed interest in seeing a multi-modal option. Paul Byrtus was concerned about cut-through traffic on Aspen Lane to go east onto Route 50. Pat Hoar inquired about the accuracy of the

optical methodology. Dan Rathbone with FCDOT stated that due to its larger sample size the accuracy will be much higher. He added that the methodology will show the queues at the interchange over time. Using input from the field, they will be able to create a model that they can run simulations on, he said. Dan asked the Task Force to think of any solutions that they don't want. This will help the transportation study.

The floor was then opened up for the Task Force to provide feedback on the Seven Corners Design Charrette from June 27th. Comments were directed at County staff and were primarily positive. John Thillmann said he thought it was the best design charrette in recent history, while other members enjoyed the examples shared with participants and the walk-through of the process beforehand. Several Task Force members recommended staff highlight what results are feasible and those that can or cannot be accomplished given the current Comprehensive Plan language.

Lastly, Iqbal Khaiy mentioned a Fiscal Impact tool that she had distributed electronically to members for their consideration. She stressed the importance of determining how they want to grow in the long term so as to be different than other places.

The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 6, 2013 at 7:00PM. The meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

By Evelyn Haught
Secretary

Date